

# Secondary and Two-Year Postsecondary Agriculture Education Challenge Grants Program

## Purpose

The Secondary and Two-Year Postsecondary Agriculture Education Challenge (SPEC) competitive grants program promotes and strengthens teaching programs in agriscience and agribusiness at secondary and 2-year postsecondary institutions by enhancing curricula, increasing faculty teaching competencies, promoting higher education to prepare students for scientific and professional careers, incorporating agriscience or agribusiness subject matter into other instructional programs, and facilitating joint initiatives among other educational institutions in response to identified State, regional, national or international educational needs.

## Awards

\$35,000 to \$50,000. A grant recipient is required to match the USDA funds awarded on a dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources. Award duration is 1.5 to 2 years.

## Impacts

- enabled teachers to update existing courses or develop new curricula and related materials to improve the quality of instruction related to the food and agricultural sciences;

## Who May Apply

- Independent school districts (public secondary schools; projects currently limited to grades 9-12 only);
- Public or private, nonprofit junior or community colleges (projects limited to degree programs at the associate level).

Other institutions are encouraged to form partnerships/collaborations with institutions above.

## Contact Information

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educationchallengessecondaryhep.html

- increased teaching competency by funding faculty continuing education that results in new teaching skills and methodologies;
- expanded student career opportunities by encouraging pursuit of higher education in the food and agricultural sciences, mentoring, internships, visiting lecturers, or other similar experiential learning activities;
- integrated agricultural education into the general instructional program (particularly classes in math, science, business, and consumer education) so that society gains a better understanding of food, health and environmental issues;



- facilitated interaction with other academic institutions (i.e., articulation agreements, 2+2 or 2+2+2 arrangements, advanced placement credits, or the sharing of faculty and facilities);
- promoted educational activities to enhance agricultural literacy and increase the diversity of underrepresented students seeking degrees in agriscience and agribusiness.

The SPEC program seeks to:

- promote and strengthen secondary education and 2-year postsecondary education in agriscience and agribusiness in order to help ensure the existence of a qualified workforce to serve the food and agricultural sciences system in the U.S.;
- promote complementary and synergistic linkages among secondary, 2-year postsecondary, and higher education programs in the food and agricultural sciences in order to advance excellence in education and encourage more young Americans to pursue and complete a baccalaureate or higher degree in the food and agricultural sciences.

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